HOLLYWOOD
SUPERSTARS
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EPIC COMICS®

Mark Evanier and Dan Spiegle

HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS

IN HOLLYWOOD, HEROES DON'T DIE . . . RIGHT?

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Hello. I'm probably *Mark Evanier.* Years ago, I made the long, hard struggle to **Hollywood,** all the way from *West Los Angeles.* In the past fifteen years, I've worked on dozens of TV shows -- which only means I can't hold a job for very long. But, along the way, I've met some fascinating people, heard some incredible stories. The tales you'll find here in **HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS** aren't exactly *true.* But they also aren't exactly *false,* either, given what passes for "truth" in this town. Join me and *Dan Spiegle* for a tour of the least likely city on this planet. And you don't even have to sit in a candy-striped tram!
SALOON
ARAGONÉS 90

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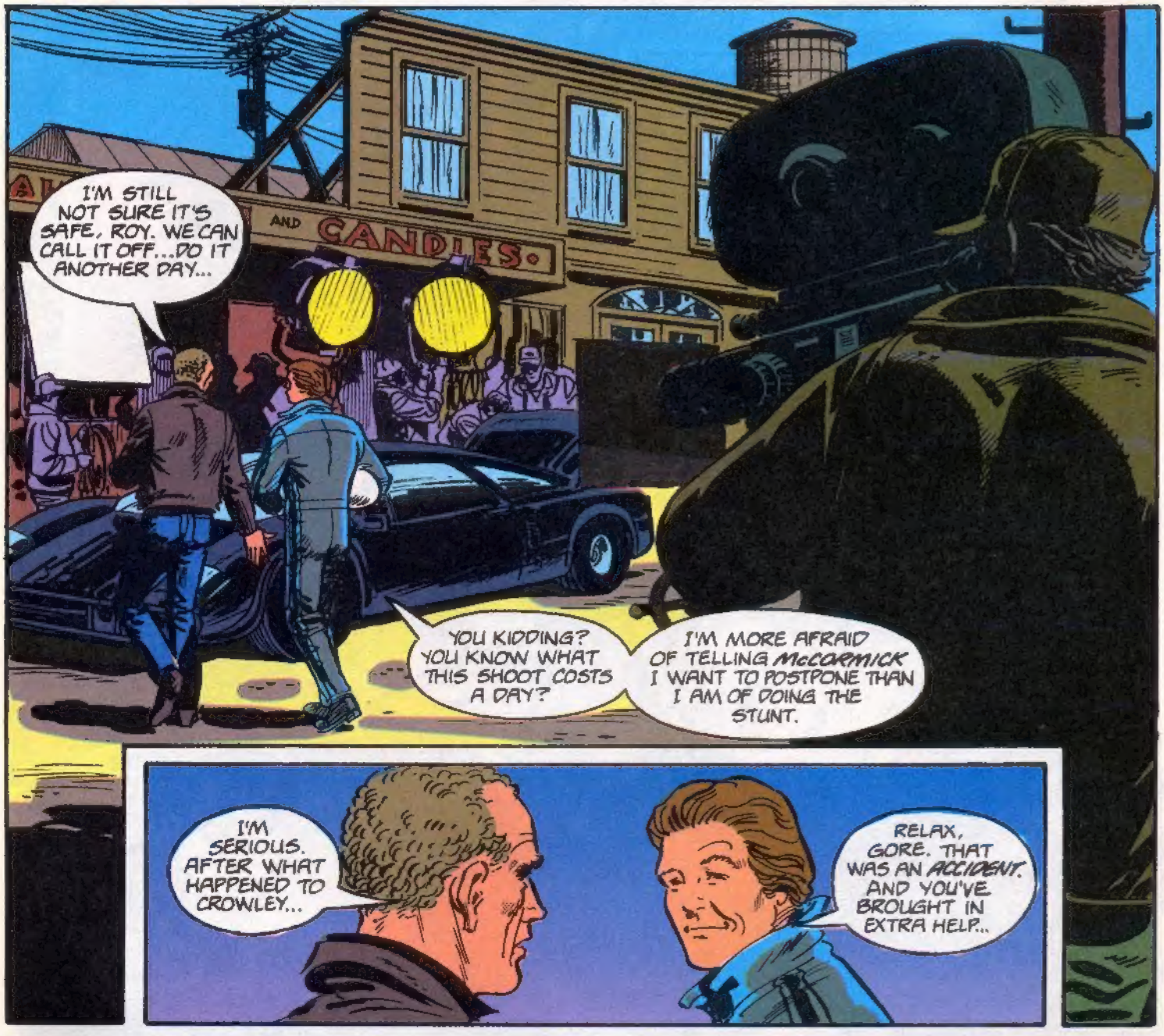
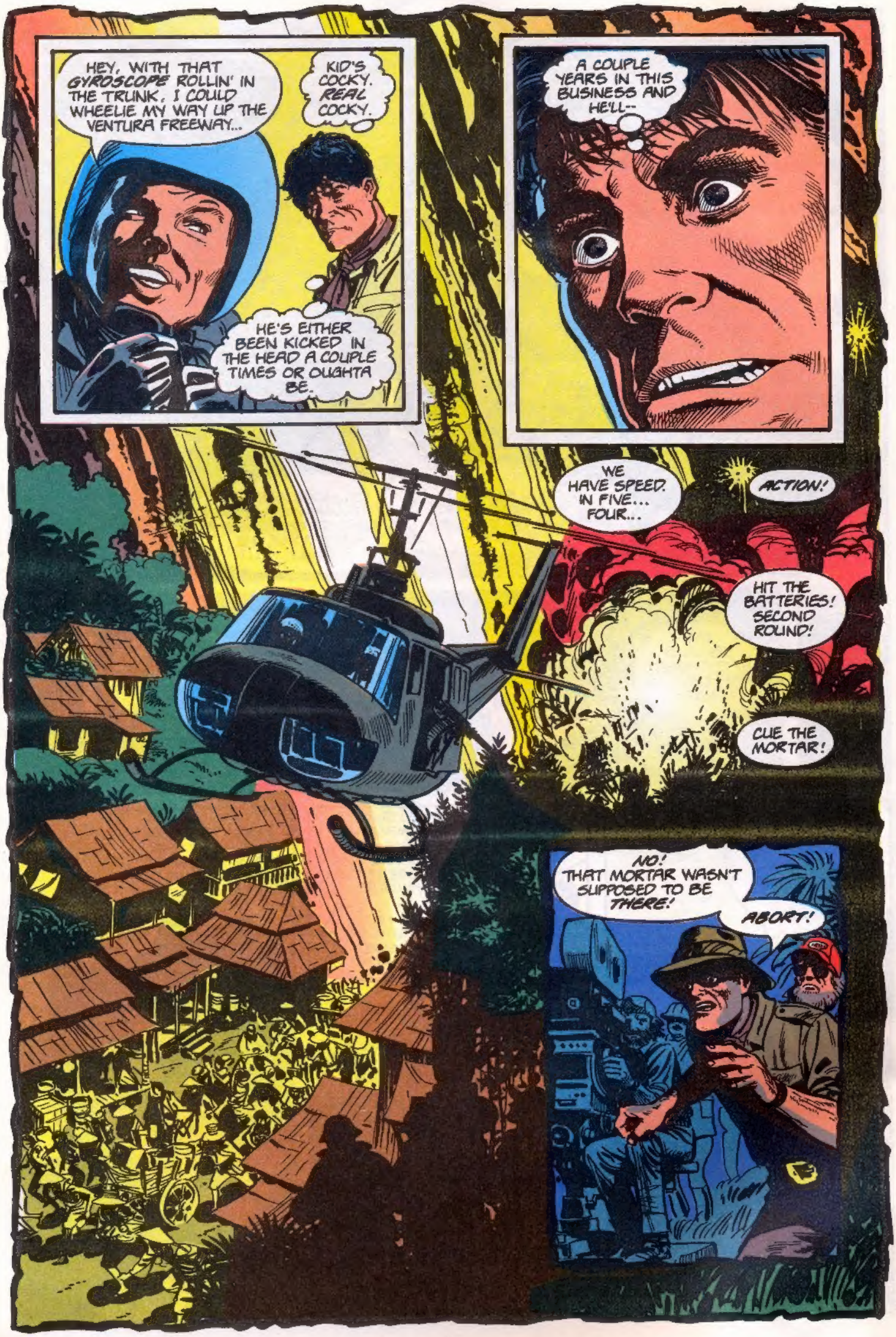

I'M STILL NOT SURE IT'S SAFE, ROY. WE CAN CALL IT OFF...DO IT ANOTHER DAY...
AND CANDLES.
YOU KIDDING? YOU KNOW WHAT THIS SHOOT COSTS A DAY?
I'M MORE AFRAID OF TELLING McCORMICK I WANT TO POSTPONE THAN I AM OF DOING THE STUNT.

I'M SERIOUS. AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO CROWLEY...
RELAX, GORE. THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT. AND YOU'VE BROUGHT IN EXTRA HELP...

SEE THAT GUY? IT'S JERRY NAYLOR. USED TO BE THE BEST STUNT COORDINATOR IN THE BUSINESS...
N6

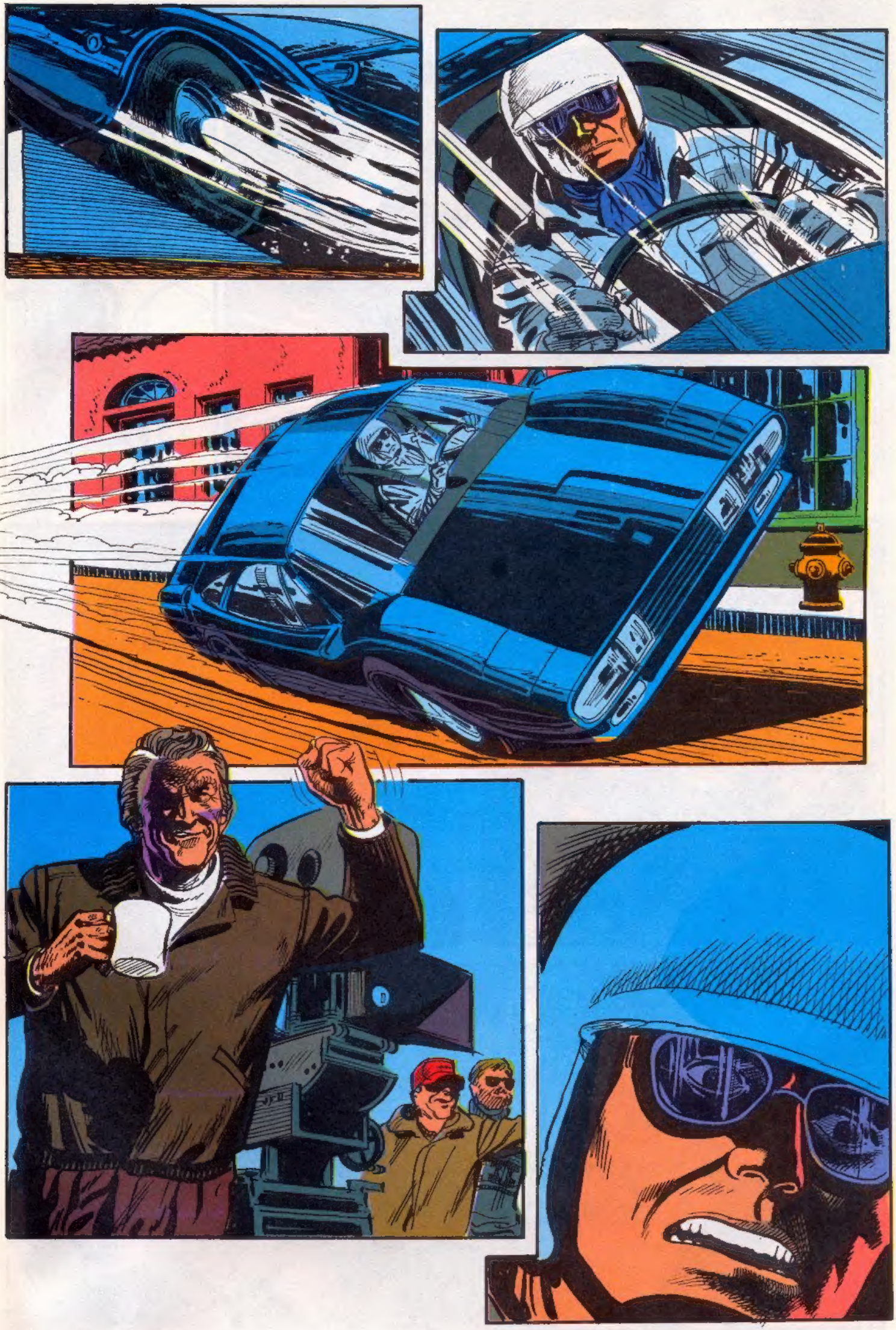
HE WAS ON "MANEUVERS," WASN'T HE?
YOU OUGHTA REMEMBER HIM, HE GAVE UP THE BIZ AFTER THE ACCIDENT THAT NIGHT.
HEY, NAYLOR! GYRO READY?

SEEMS PERFECT...AND I CHECKED THE RAMP. I DON'T SEE HOW ANY-THING CAN GO WRONG...
BUT I'D STILL TRY TO GET IT IN ONE.

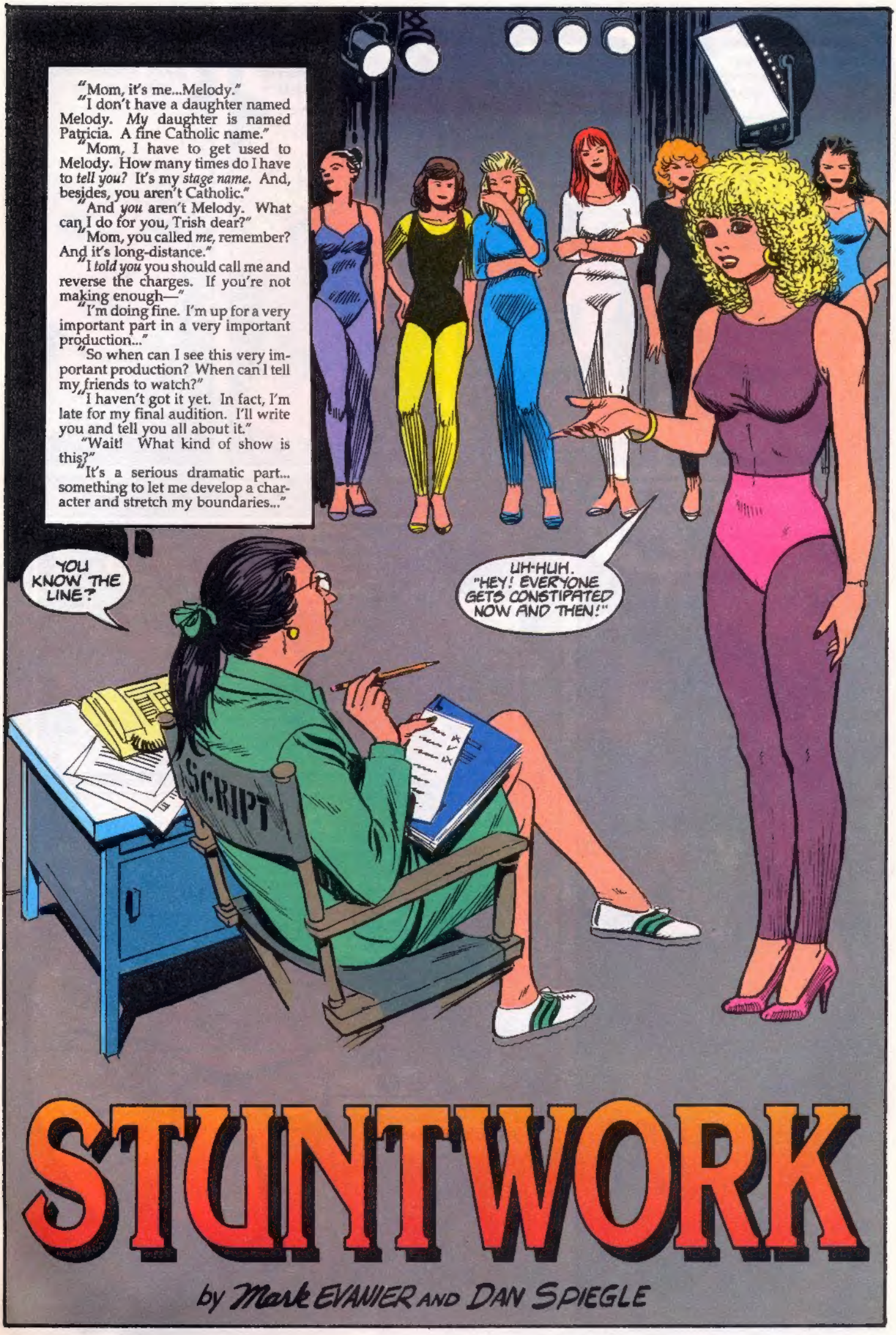

HEY, WITH THAT GYROSCOPE ROLLIN' IN THE TRUNK, I COULD WHEELIE MY WAY UP THE VENTURA FREEWAY...
KID'S COCKY. REAL COCKY.
HE'S EITHER BEEN KICKED IN THE HEAD A COUPLE TIMES OR OUGHTA BE.
A COUPLE YEARS IN THIS BUSINESS AND HE'LL--
WE HAVE SPEED. IN FIVE... FOUR...
ACTION!
HIT THE BATTERIES! SECOND ROUND!
CUE THE MORTAR!
NO! THAT MORTAR WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THERE!
ABORT!

CALL IT OFF! THE CHOPPER'S COMING IN TOO LOW OVER THE MORTAR!
WHAT ARE YOU, OUT OF YOUR MIND? "CALL IT OFF?"
GET BACK WITH THE CREW, NAYLOR!
I'M STUNT SUPERVISOR HERE AND I SAY CALL IT OFF! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!
GET OFF MY SET!
GRIPS! GET THIS MAN OUTTA HERE--!
BRING IT IN LOWER! GET THE CHOPPER IN THE SHOT!
YOU'RE GOING TO GET SOMEONE KILLED, McCORMICK! AND ALL FOR A MOVIE...ALL FOR A LOUSY, STINKIN' LITTLE-
--MOVIE...

ALL RIGHT...QUIET, EVERYBODY! THIS IS A STUNT AND IT'S A TAKE!
I SHOULDN'T HAVE AGREED TO DO THIS...
NOTHIN' MORE I CAN DO HERE EXCEPT PRAY.
SOUND DEPT.
OKAY. I GOT YOU COVERED EVERY WAY. JUST HIT THE RAMP DEAD-ON.
MAKE SURE YOU GET MY GOOD SIDE, MAC.



CUT!
PRINT THAT.' THAT'S A TAKE!
NO. NOT AGAIN. GOD, NO.
ALL RIGHT! LET'S TAKE IT FROM THE TOP--!


"Mom, it's me...Melody."
"I don't have a daughter named Melody. My daughter is named Patricia. A fine Catholic name."
"Mom, I have to get used to Melody. How many times do I have to tell you? It's my stage name. And, besides, you aren't Catholic."
"And you aren't Melody. What can I do for you, Trish dear?"
"Mom, you called me, remember? And it's long-distance."
"I told you you should call me and reverse the charges. If you're not making enough—"
"I'm doing fine. I'm up for a very important part in a very important production..."
"So when can I see this very important production? When can I tell my friends to watch?"
"I haven't got it yet. In fact, I'm late for my final audition. I'll write you and tell you all about it."
"Wait! What kind of show is this?"
"It's a serious dramatic part... something to let me develop a character and stretch my boundaries..."
YOU KNOW THE LINE?
UH-HUH. "HEY! EVERYONE GETS CONSTIPATED NOW AND THEN!"
SCRIPT
STUNTWORK
by Mark EVANIER AND DAN SPIEGLE

AGAIN!

"HEY! EVERYONE GETS CONSTIPATED NOW AND THEN!"

AGAIN!

"HEY! EVERYONE GETS CONSTIPATED NOW AND THEN!"

ONCE MORE!

"HEY! EVERYONE GETS CONSTIPATED NOW AND THEN!"

"HEY! EVERYONE GETS CONSTIPATED NOW AND THEN!"

THAT'S THE LOOK!

YOU MEAN I'VE GOT IT?

YOU WERE *PERFECT!* ABSOLUTELY *PERFECT!* COULD *NOT* HAVE BEEN BETTER!

STAY BY THE PHONE! DON'T *BUDGE* UNTIL I CALL!

I WILL, I WILL!

AND STAY BY THE PHONE SHE DID...

...THOUGH, BY THE THIRD WEEK, SHE WAS STARTING TO LOSE HOPE...

I WONDER IF I CAN BUDGE *NOW*...

ReadComicsOnline.to

MRS. NUREMBERG! HOW DID YOU GET IN?
I'M A LANDLADY. I HAVE A GOD-GIVEN RIGHT TO GO ANYWHERE I WANT, DO ANYTHING I WANT...
THIS BUILDING'S GOING CONDO! I'M SELLING THIS LUXURY APARTMENT FOR $275,000. WANNA BUY IT?
NO.
THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO MOVE. I'LL GIVE YOU A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TIME. YOU HAVE THREE HOURS.
SHE'D BEEN HERE BEFORE: NEWLY-ARRIVED IN TOWN WITH LOADS OF PHOTOS, A FEW CREDITS IN LOCAL THEATRE AND SIX MONTHS' INCOME...
NOW SHE STILL HAD THE PHOTOS AND THE CREDITS...
RIGHT BACK WHERE I STARTED...
MAYBE MOM'S RIGHT. MAYBE I OUGHT TO GO BACK HOME AND MARRY RON...
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY GIRLS GO TO CALIFORNIA? DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE ODDS ARE?
I KNOW, I KNOW. BUT I'VE GOT TO TRY...
I CAN'T SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE WONDERING WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF I'D TRIED. YOU UNDERSTAND...
YEAH... SURE...

RON, OF COURSE, DIDN'T UNDERSTAND. AND SHE KNEW HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND BUT SHE PRETENDED HE DID...

...JUST AS SHE PRETENDED *SHE* UNDERSTOOD...

EACH NIGHT, ALL THE PRETENSE GAVE WAY TO THE COLD, HARD REALITY OF MAKING A LIVING...

...AND NOW, THE COMEDY PLACE IS PROUD TO PRESENT THE COMEDY STYLINGS OF LEO HANEY...

HEY, HON! WHAT WOULD I HAVE TO GIVE YOU FOR A KISS?

NOVOCAINE.

ANGIE, PLEASE RECONSIDER. I JUST NEED A PLACE FOR A COUPLE DAYS...

SORRY, HON. MY ROOMMATE IS RADIO-ACTIVE.

LISTEN TO THIS NEW COMIC. HE'S *GREAT*.

HEY, THANK YOU. HOW MANY HERE ARE ALREADY SICK OF JOKES ABOUT LATE-NIGHT COMMERCIALS--?

MOST OF YOU? OKAY, SCRATCH THAT MATERIAL. WHAT ELSE HAVE I GOT?

I'M LEO HANEY-- SOME NAME FOR A JEWISH KID, RIGHT?
MY FOLKS WERE GOING TO NAME ME BUICK BECAUSE THEY REALLY WANTED A STATION WAGON...
THE FIRST LAUGH WAS ALWAYS THE HARDEST...
THEN IT CAME, A JOYOUS NOISE TO HANEY'S EARS AND YET...
...AND YET THERE WERE MOMENTS WHEN ONE LAUGH COULD BE HEARD ABOVE ALL OTHERS...
AND NOT BECAUSE IT WAS LOUDER...
...BECAUSE IT WAS MORE MEANINGFUL.
SHE WAS WAY IN THE BACK. HE COULD BARELY SEE HER. BUT HE KNEW...
THREE SECONDS AFTER HE WAS OFF...
WHO IS SHE? WHAT'S HER NAME? WHAT'S HER BLOOD-TYPE?
I'M GOING TO MARRY THAT GIRL AND HAVE 2.3 CHILDREN!
OKAY, SO SHE'LL LEAVE ME FOR A HISPANIC TENNIS PRO! BUT WE'LL GRAB A FEW MOMENTS OF HAPPINESS FIRST!
LET GO!

AT 2:15, IT WAS TIME TO GO HOME. ONE PROBLEM...

MAYBE I CAN BUNK AT THE "Y!"

JESUS, DIDN'T NEED THIS IN MY LIFE. I JUST--

EXCUSE ME BUT I'M TRYING TO THINK OF A REAL CLEVER WAY TO PICK YOU UP.

IF YOU COULD JUST GIVE ME A FEW MORE MINUTES...

YOU'RE THE COMEDIAN-- THE ONE THEY SAY HAS THE FASTEST MIND IN THE PLACE.

YEAH, WELL, IT'S PLAYING AT 33 AND 1/3 TONIGHT..

I MEET A GIRL I LIKE, I COULDN'T AD-LIB A BELCH AFTER A HUNGARIAN DINNER...

GEEZ, I *MUST BE* IN LOVE. I'M USING HENNY YOUNGMAN MATERIAL... AND THE *CLEAN* VERSIONS, AT THAT...

I'M LEO HANEY AND I'LL WAIT A DECENT INTERVAL BEFORE ASKING YOU TO MARRY ME.

HOW ABOUT *NOW?*

SHE LAUGHED. HE EXHALED.

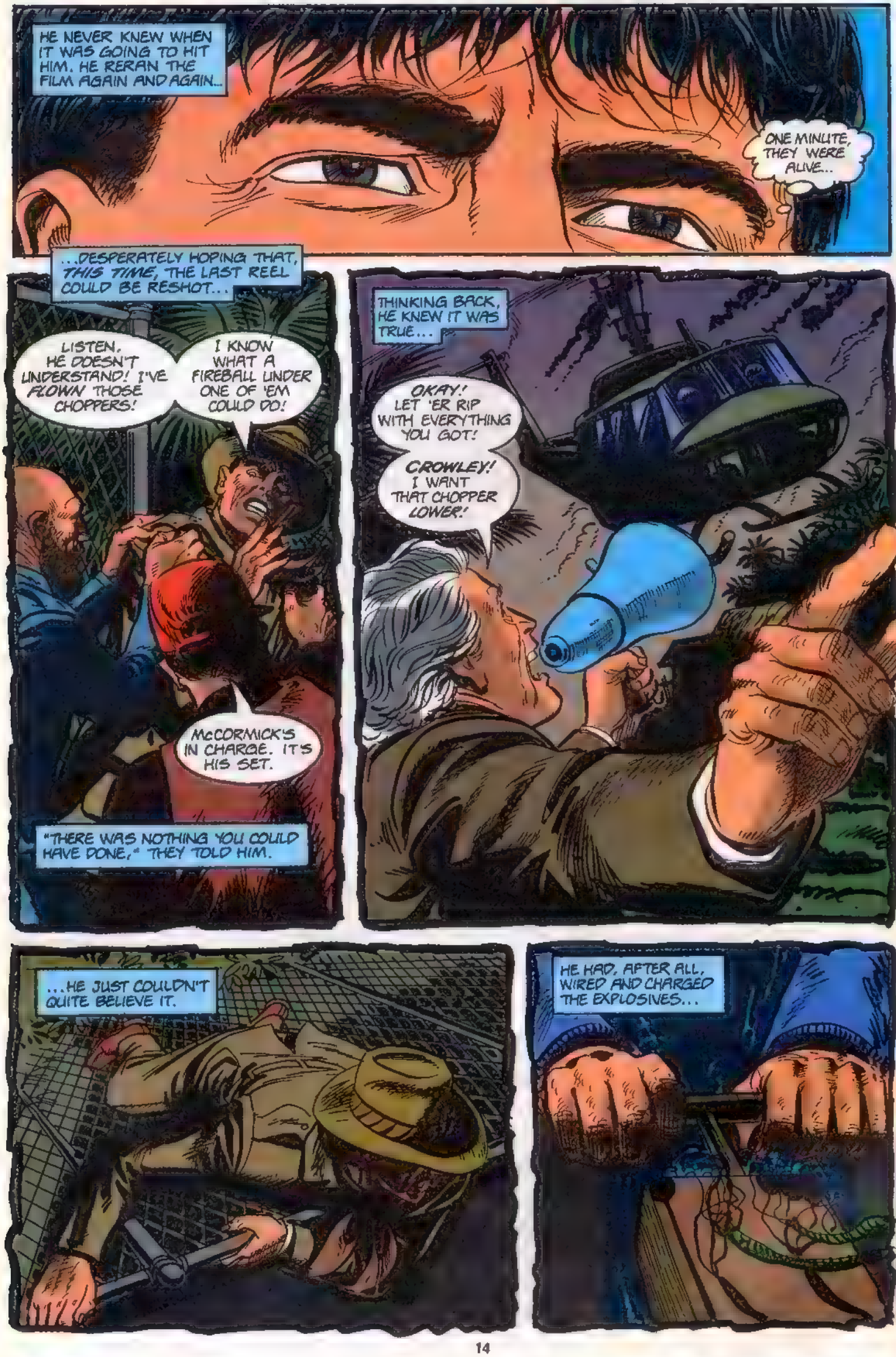
FROM THERE ON, THE CONVERSATION CAME EASIER. SHE TOLD HIM ALL ABOUT HERSELF...

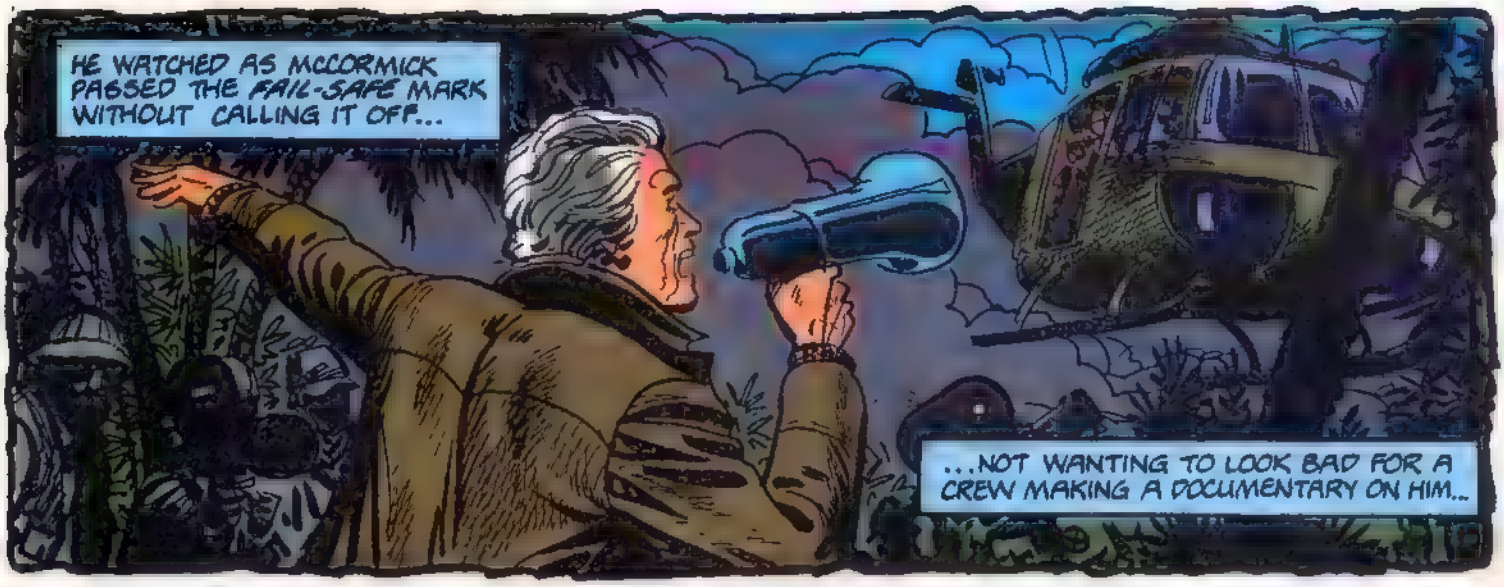
YOU HAVE NO PLACE TO SLEEP TONIGHT--?

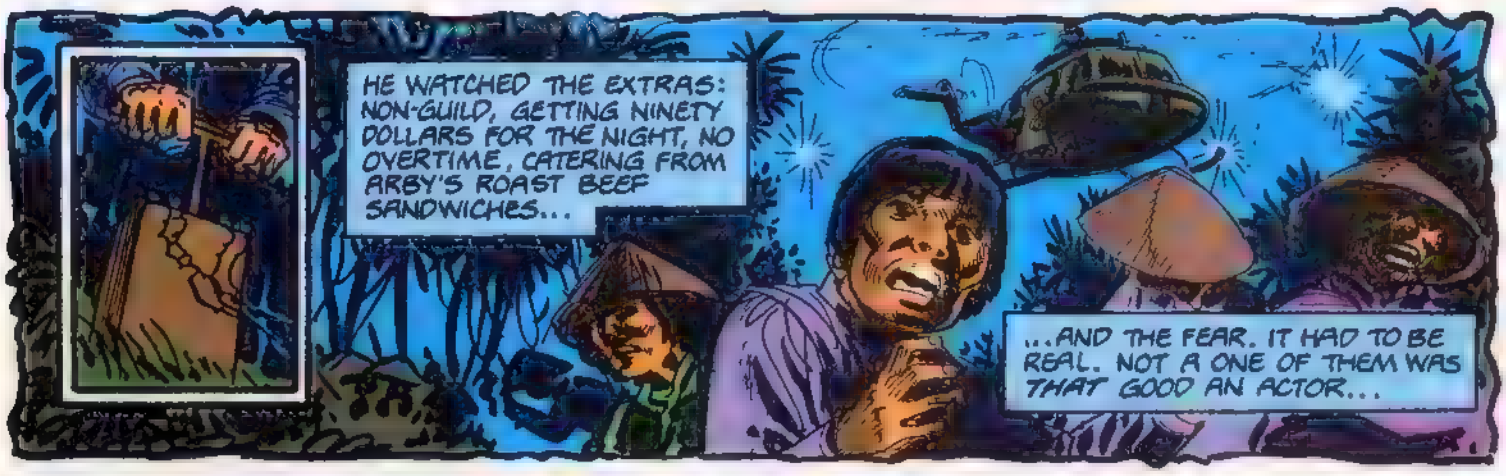
YOU CAN STAY AT MY PLACE. TAKE MY BED. I'LL SLEEP ON THE COUCH AND MAYBE WHIMPER A BIT AT THE DOOR...

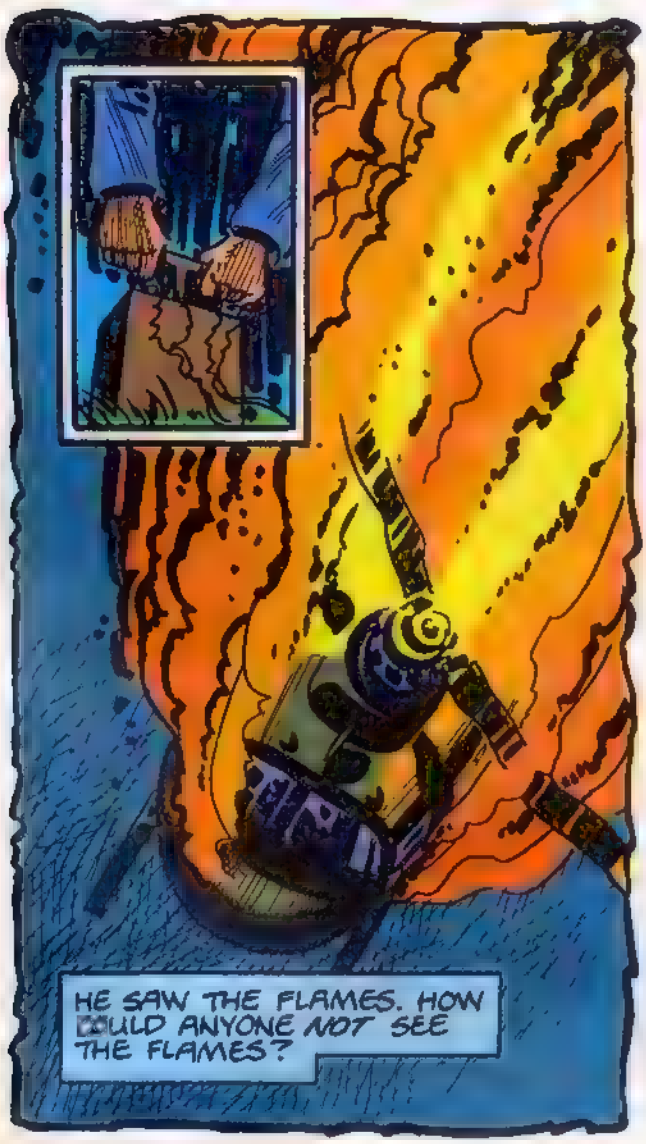
HANEY.

NAYLOR! LOOK, I'M SORRY, I'M BUSY. THIS IS SISTER MARY MAGDALENE AND I HAVE TO GET HER BACK TO HER CONVENT--!
LEO, I NEED HELP. GOD, DO I...
BUT... JERRY, I JUST MET...
ROY BALOCCA GOT KILLED. IN A STUNT...FOR McCORMICK...
I DIDN'T KNOW McCORMICK WAS DIRECTING. I AGREED TO HELP. I DIDN'T KNOW...
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT THE LAST TIME.
BUT IT WAS. I'M PART OF IT ALL...
WE FORGET. WE SPEND SO DAMN MUCH TIME IN MAKE-BELIEVE LAND, WE FORGET. PEOPLE GET SHOT. THEY FALL DOWN...
THEY DON'T GET UP AGAIN.
NAME'S JERRY NAYLOR. FRIEND OF MINE. WE HAVE A LITTLE "BUSINESS" WE RUN...SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS...
PEOPLE GETTING KILLED..FOR REAL.


HE NEVER KNEW WHEN IT WAS GOING TO HIT HIM. HE RERAN THE FILM AGAIN AND AGAIN...
ONE MINUTE, THEY WERE ALIVE...
...DESPERATELY HOPING THAT, THIS TIME, THE LAST REEL COULD BE RESHOT...
LISTEN. HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND! I'VE FLOWN THOSE CHOPPERS!
I KNOW WHAT A FIREBALL UNDER ONE OF 'EM COULD DO!
McCORMICK'S IN CHARGE. IT'S HIS SET.
"THERE WAS NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE," THEY TOLD HIM.
THINKING BACK, HE KNEW IT WAS TRUE...
OKAY! LET 'ER RIP WITH EVERYTHING YOU GOT!
CROWLEY! I WANT THAT CHOPPER LOWER!
...HE JUST COULDN'T QUITE BELIEVE IT.
HE HAD, AFTER ALL, WIRED AND CHARGED THE EXPLOSIVES...


HE WATCHED AS MCCORMICK PASSED THE FAIL-SAFE MARK WITHOUT CALLING IT OFF...
...NOT WANTING TO LOOK BAD FOR A CREW MAKING A DOCUMENTARY ON HIM...


HE WATCHED THE EXTRAS: NON-GUILD, GETTING NINETY DOLLARS FOR THE NIGHT, NO OVERTIME, CATERING FROM ARBY'S ROAST BEEF SANDWICHES...
...AND THE FEAR. IT HAD TO BE REAL. NOT A ONE OF THEM WAS THAT GOOD AN ACTOR...


HE SAW THE FLAMES. HOW COULD ANYONE NOT SEE THE FLAMES?

ROY! GET DOWN!
KEEP FILMING! DON'T STOP FILMING!
HE SAW IT ALL: THE EXPLOSION, THE TERROR, THE DIRECTOR MORE INTERESTED IN A SHOT THAN THEIR LIVES. HE SAW IT ALL...

...INCLUDING THE FIREBALL, FIVE TIMES THE SIZE IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN, THAT SWALLOWED THE CHOPPER...

HE COULD HEAR THE PINCH LINK RIP AND THE TAIL-ROTOR SCREAM. LIFE KICKED INTO SLOW-MOTION PLAYBACK...

FREEZE-FRAME:

AGAIN AND AGAIN, JERRY NAYLOR RERAN THE FILM AFTER THAT NIGHT...

WITHOUT TOUCHING CELLULOID, HE RE-EDITED IT A HUNDRED WAYS...

THE ENDING WAS, EVERY TIME, THE SAME...
THAT'S A WRAP!
"I TRIED TO STOP IT."
"I TOLD HIM IT WASN'T SAFE ...TOLD HIM TO ABORT..."
"THEY'D BE ALIVE TODAY IF HE'D LISTENED TO ME .."
FRIENDS HELPED JERRY NAYLOR. HE HAD PLENTY...
BUT EVEN A YEAR LATER, AFTER THE TRIAL AND ACQUITTAL...
...SHOULD PASS MORE STRINGENT SAFETY LAWS ON THE SET...
JERRY, ENOUGH!

I'VE BEEN HEARING THAT SONG FROM YOU FOR A YEAR NOW--!
IT'S ALREADY GONE PLATINUM. IN FACT, IT'S A GOLDEN OLDIE, FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD! WE ALL HAVE OUR PROBLEMS...
AMERICAN EXPRESS IS SENDING A SWAT TEAM OVER TO GET ME...
"ALL RIGHT! WE KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE! THROW OUT YOUR CREDIT CARD AND COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP!"
I'VE... I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING USEFUL...
"USEFUL?" HOW USEFUL AM I? YOU KNOW WHERE ASPIRING STAND-UP COMEDIANS FALL ON THE USEFUL LIST?
WE'RE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN BUGGY WHIP REPAIRMEN AND PEZ DISPENSERS.
REMEMBER THAT IDEA I HAD ONCE, LEO?
THE PRIVATE EYE DEAL? SURE!
REMEMBER I SAID: "WHEN YOU THINK IT'S TIME, I THINK IT'S A GREAT WAY TO PICK UP EXTRA CASH."
I THINK IT'S TIME.
THAT WAS LATE LAST YEAR...
NOW...
SAY, Y'KNOW, WE COULD USE SOME HELP AROUND THE OFFICE. MAYBE YOU COULD COME IN, WORK FOR US...
THAT WOULD BE GREAT!
WHAT?
I NEED TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOU!
EXCUSE US JUST ONE SECOND.

WE CAN'T AFFORD--

PLEASE, JERRY! PRETTY-PLEASE WITH SWEET N' LOW ON IT! YOU DIDN'T GET ME ANYTHING FOR CHRISTMAS...

JUST LET ME HAVE *HER*. I'M SO CLOSE. SHE HAS NO PLACE TO STAY TONIGHT...

R10-5

HE SEEMS NICE. NOT LIKE THE USUAL HOLLYWOOD *LETCH*.

HE MUST BE TELLING HIS FRIEND WHAT A HARD-WORKER I AM...WHAT AN ASSET I WOULD BE TO THEIR OFFICE...

LOOK AT THAT BODY. I WOULD FORFEIT MY ENTIRE LIFE FROM AGE SIXTY-FIVE ON FOR TWO HOURS AT A RAMADA INN WITH HER...

I'M IN LOVE. SORTA.

ALL RIGHT. I JUST HOPE SOMEONE HIRES US.

LITTLE LADY, YOU GOT A JOB. AND I GOT A FRIEND WHO'LL LET YOU BUNK WITH HER A FEW DAYS.

OH NO! I CAN PUT HER UP! IT'S NO PROBLEM.

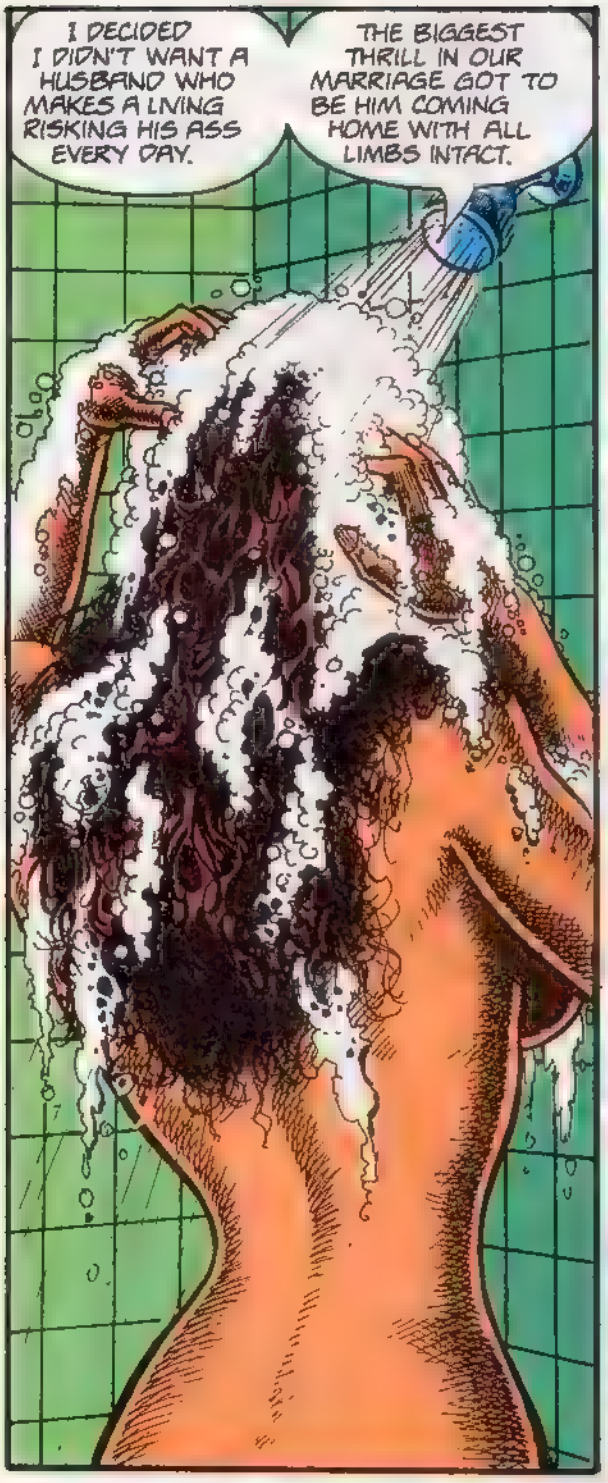
THANKS. I REALLY NEED A PLACE.

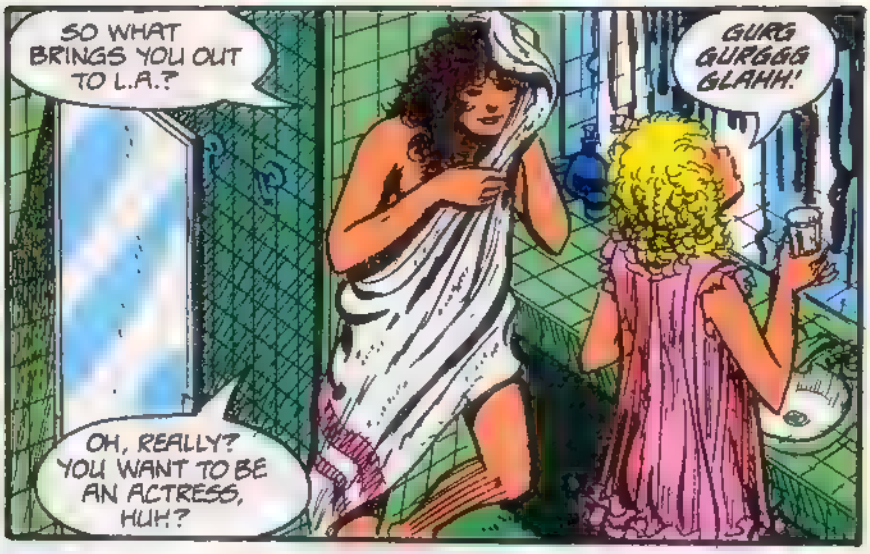
TRILBY NYE WAS THE BEST MAKE-UP/HAIR SPECIALIST IN HOLLYWOOD, SOME SAID. SHE WELCOMED HER SURPRISE GUEST...

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME, HON.

IT'S VERY UNFAIR OF YOU TO ASK YOUR EX-WIFE TO TAKE MELODY IN. THERE'S ROOM AT *MY* PLACE...

IT'S OKAY. I COULD USE A HAND WITH THE RENT HERE...
ESPECIALLY SINCE SOMEBODY IS WAY BEHIND IN ALIMONY.
GOD ALMIGHTY, TRILB. YOU MAKE TEN TIMES WHAT I--
TED WATERS CALLED. HE'S WORKING FOR KAYPAR NOW. SAYS HE NEEDS YOU TO DO A JOB FOR THE STUDIO.
HE WAS CALLING ALL OVER TOWN, LOOKING FOR YOU.
COME ON. WE MAY HAVE A JOB.
I THOUGHT I'D STAY AND DISCUSS BALZAC WITH MELODY-!
PUT IT AWAY, LEO.
TED WATERS WAS HEAD OF KAYPAR STUDIOS. THIS WEEK.
HOW COME THAT BAILBONDSMAN SOLD YOU HIS T-BIRD?
FINANCIAL CRISIS. HE HAD A LOT OF CLIENTS BUT THEY DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF MONEY.
LET'S STOP AT A PAY PHONE ...SEE IF WATERS IS UP.
JERRY'S A GREAT GUY...AND LEO'S LIKE THE SMARTEST PERSON I'VE EVER MET.
HOW COME YOU AND JERRY GOT DIVORCED? IF YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKING.


I DECIDED I DIDN'T WANT A HUSBAND WHO MAKES A LIVING RISKING HIS ASS EVERY DAY.
THE BIGGEST THRILL IN OUR MARRIAGE GOT TO BE HIM COMING HOME WITH ALL LIMBS INTACT.


SO WHAT BRINGS YOU OUT TO L.A.?
GURG GURGGG GLAHH!
OH, REALLY? YOU WANT TO BE AN ACTRESS, HUH?

ON THE OLD WEST STREET OF THE KAYPAR MOVIE LOT...
WATERS?
YOU STILL IN THE "SPECIAL MATTERS" BUSINESS, NAYLOR?

I NEED SOMETHING HANDLED AND IT CAN'T GET OUT. THAT'S YOUR SPECIALTY, RIGHT? BEING DISCREET?

SHE LIKED ME. IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME.
ANOTHER PALIMONY INVESTIGA-TION?

IT...IT HAS TO DO WITH STUNTMEN GETTING KILLED ON McCORMICK'S MOVIES.

I NEED A FULL INVESTIGATION. WAS ROY BALOCCA'S DEATH AN ACCIDENT? OR WAS McCORMICK TO BLAME?

WHY NOT LET THE INSURANCE INVESTIGATORS HANDLE IT?

I'LL GET HER ROSES... NO, SOMETHING BIGGER... TREES!

THERE, UH, AREN'T ANY. I MEAN THERE'S NO INSURANCE.

NO INSURANCE? ON A THIRTY-MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE?

AFTER WHAT HAPPENED ON THE VIET NAM FILM, NO COMPANY WOULD INSURE A FILM DIRECTED BY McCORMICK...

I SHOULD HAVE SAID *NO* TO IT...BUT IT WAS TOO APPEALING A PACKAGE. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS DOESN'T KNOW.

...WHICH MEANS I HAVE MY VITAL ORGANS ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK. BUT IF YOU COULD PROVE...

SAY NO MORE. WE'LL HANDLE IT.

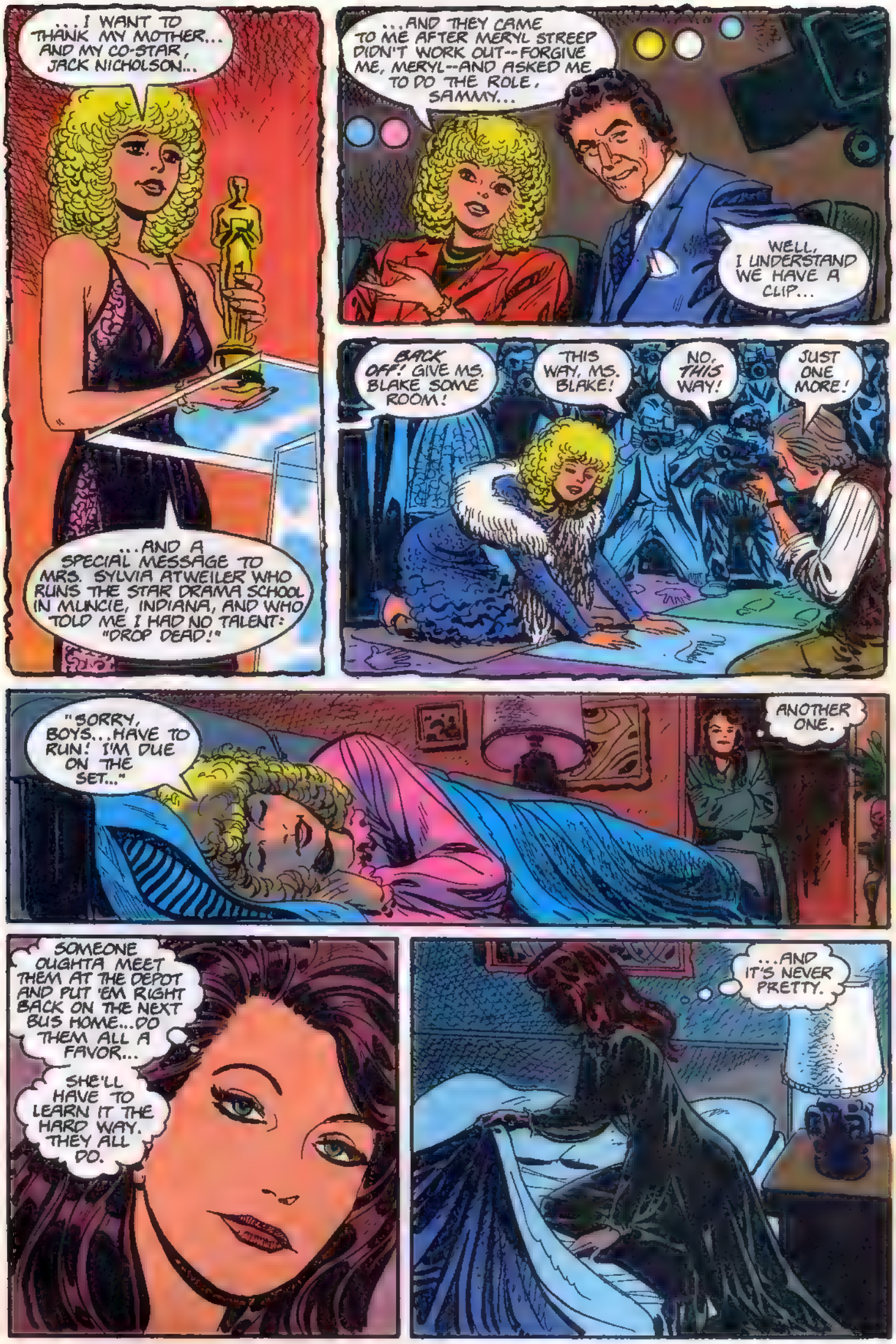
SHE'S PROBABLY DREAMING ABOUT ME RIGHT NOW...

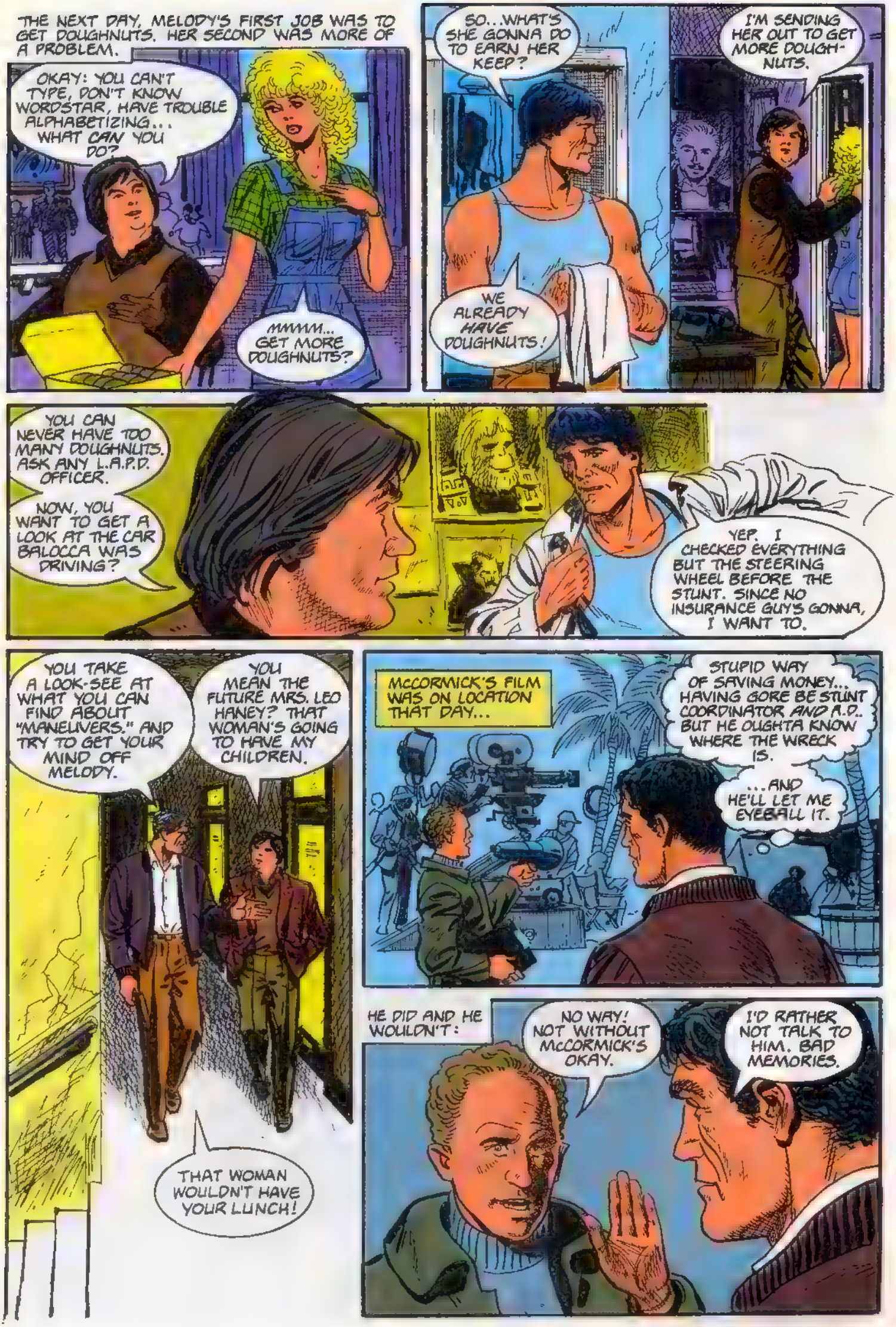
MELODY WAS DREAMING, ALL RIGHT...

...WIDE AWAKE AND DREAMING AND NOT ABOUT LEO HANEY:

ALL THESE NEW PEOPLE IN MY LIFE...MAYBE THIS MARKS A *TURNING POINT* FOR ME...

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN SO SHY...SO WITHDRAWN. MAYBE NOW THINGS WILL START TO HAPPEN...


...I WANT TO THANK MY MOTHER... AND MY CO-STAR, JACK NICHOLSON...
...AND A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO MRS. SYLVIA ATWEILER WHO RUNS THE STAR DRAMA SCHOOL IN MUNCIE, INDIANA, AND WHO TOLD ME I HAD NO TALENT: "DROP DEAD!"
...AND THEY CAME TO ME AFTER MERYL STREEP DIDN'T WORK OUT--FORGIVE ME, MERYL--AND ASKED ME TO DO THE ROLE, SAMMY...
WELL, I UNDERSTAND WE HAVE A CLIP...
BACK OFF! GIVE MS. BLAKE SOME ROOM!
THIS WAY, MS. BLAKE!
NO, THIS WAY!
JUST ONE MORE!
"SORRY, BOYS...HAVE TO RUN! I'M DUE ON THE SET..."
ANOTHER ONE.
SOMEONE OUGHTA MEET THEM AT THE DEPOT AND PUT 'EM RIGHT BACK ON THE NEXT BUS HOME...DO THEM ALL A FAVOR...
SHE'LL HAVE TO LEARN IT THE HARD WAY. THEY ALL DO.
...AND IT'S NEVER PRETTY.


THE NEXT DAY, MELODY'S FIRST JOB WAS TO GET DOUGHNUTS. HER SECOND WAS MORE OF A PROBLEM.
OKAY: YOU CAN'T TYPE, DON'T KNOW WORDSTAR, HAVE TROUBLE ALPHABETIZING... WHAT CAN YOU DO?
MMMM... GET MORE DOUGHNUTS?
SO...WHAT'S SHE GONNA DO TO EARN HER KEEP?
I'M SENDING HER OUT TO GET MORE DOUGH-NUTS.
WE ALREADY HAVE DOUGHNUTS!
YOU CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MANY DOUGHNUTS. ASK ANY L.A.P.D. OFFICER.
NOW, YOU WANT TO GET A LOOK AT THE CAR BALOCCA WAS DRIVING?
YEP. I CHECKED EVERYTHING BUT THE STEERING WHEEL BEFORE THE STUNT. SINCE NO INSURANCE GUY'S GONNA, I WANT TO.
YOU TAKE A LOOK-SEE AT WHAT YOU CAN FIND ABOUT "MANEUVERS." AND TRY TO GET YOUR MIND OFF MELODY.
YOU MEAN THE FUTURE MRS. LEO HANEY? THAT WOMAN'S GOING TO HAVE MY CHILDREN.
THAT WOMAN WOULDN'T HAVE YOUR LUNCH!
McCORMICK'S FILM WAS ON LOCATION THAT DAY...
STUPID WAY OF SAVING MONEY... HAVING GORE BE STUNT COORDINATOR AND A.D.. BUT HE OUGHTA KNOW WHERE THE WRECK IS.
...AND HE'LL LET ME EYEBALL IT.
HE DID AND HE WOULDN'T:
NO WAY! NOT WITHOUT McCORMICK'S OKAY.
I'D RATHER NOT TALK TO HIM. BAD MEMORIES.

THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM.

HE'S RIGHT. THAT *IS* MY PROBLEM.

GET ME A PERRIER!

I SAID PERRIER!

YES, SIR. I'LL SEND A RUNNER TO THE MARKET--!

WE'RE ALL OUT. BUT WE HAVE EVIAN AND--

STILL OBSESSED WITH GIVING ORDERS AND HAVING THEM FOLLOWED...

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH TALKING TO HIM. WHAT HARM CAN...

I DON'T CARE *WHAT'S* WRONG WITH THE FRIGGIN' CRANE! I WANT THIS SHOT FROM THAT ANGLE!

ON THE SET, AS DIRECTOR, I AM IN ABSOLUTE CONTROL. MY WORD IS LAW. I DO NOT TOLERATE ITS BEING QUESTIONED.

NOW, REGARDING STUNTS, I RELY ON THE ADVICE OF A STUNT COORDINATOR...

EXCUSE ME. WHO *WAS* THE STUNT COORDINATOR THAT NIGHT?

ReadComi

THAT MAN. JERRY NAYLOR.
I CHECKED THE MORTAR CHARGES ABOUT FIVE MINUTES BEFORE THE SCENE. THEY WERE REGULATION.
ONE LAST QUESTION, MR. NAYLOR. SHOULD MR. MCCORMICK HAVE EXPECTED THE FIREBALL TO GO AS HIGH AS IT DID?
NO, BUT HE SHOULDN'T HAVE OR-
NO FURTHER QUESTIONS. THANK YOU, MR. NAYLOR.
I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE. I WANTED TO SAY HE SHOULDN'T HAVE ORDERED THE CHOPPER THAT LOW. I WARNED HIM--!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MR. NAYLOR. YOU'RE DONE. YOUR TESTIMONY WAS VERY HELPFUL.
"WE, THE JURY, IN THE ABOVE ENTITLED ACTION, FIND THE DEFENDANT, W. 'MAC' MCCORMICK... NOT GUILTY."
...NO HARM IN TALKING TO HIM...CONFRONTING HIM...

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO READ YOU TODAY, HON. COME UP TO MY ESTATE TONIGHT AT NINE.
THIS IS STUPID... DAMNED STUPID...
...SO WHY AM I LEAVING?
ONE OF LEO HANEY'S FAVORITE PLACES IN THE WORLD WAS HARRY FINSTER'S BOOK AND POSTER STORE...
POSTERS
"MELODY HANEY." "MELODY BLAKE-HANEY." YEAH...NOT A BAD STAGE NAME...
NO ONE QUITE KNEW WHO HARRY FINSTER WAS. THE PROPRIETOR WAS JUST NAMED SPROCKET...
"MANEUVERS," HUH? THAT WAS THAT 'NAM FILM WHERE ALL THE EXTRAS GOT KILLED IN THE STUNT ACCIDENT...
THEY HAD ANOTHER DEATH THE OTHER DAY ON A NEW FILM BY THE SAME DIRECTOR.
I HEARD. "MANEUVERS." WHAT'CHA GOT?
JUST A SHOOTING SCRIPT. HEY, I GOT ONE FOR YOU, HANEY...BET YOU WON'T GET IT. "DAUGHTERS OF SATAN."
TOM SELLECK. DIRECTED BY HOLLINGSWORTH MORSE. TERRIBLE FILM.
HEY, WHERE DO YOU GET STUFF LIKE THIS SCRIPT, ANYWAY?
CREW GUYS HAUL 'EM IN HERE BY THE TON TO SELL. THAT ONE'S REAL RARE FOR SOME REASON.
WHY WOULD THE SCRIPT FOR THIS TURKEY BE RARE? IT WASN'T A--
JESUS! BALOCCA'S NAME IS HERE ON THE CREW LIST! HE WORKED ON IT!

I WONDER IF JERRY KNOWS THAT!

HEY! TEN BUCKS FOR THE SCRIPT, OR I'LL LET YOU HAVE IT FOR THAT JACK PALANCE PICTURE DISK OF YOURS!

BACK AT THE OFFICE, MELODY HAS BEEN VERY BUSY...

MR. NAYLOR! WHAT'S WRONG?

JERRY, "MR. NAYLOR" IS MY FATHER'S NAME.

AND NOTHING'S WRONG.

EVEN MELODY KNEW THAT "NOTHING WRONG," SAID WITH THAT TONE, MEANT THAT PLENTY WAS WRONG...

I USED TO DIVE OUT OF AIRPLANES...JUMP MOTORCYCLES...

I DOUBLED FOR PAUL NEWMAN... DOVE OFF A FIFTY FOOT CLIFF!

JERRY, EVERY TIME SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING HEROIC, YOU OUGHTA GET A *ROYALTY*.

YOU'RE A HELLUVA GUY AND THIS THING'S ONLY GOT YOU DOWN BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO COMPASSIONATE TO BE A MACHO JERK.

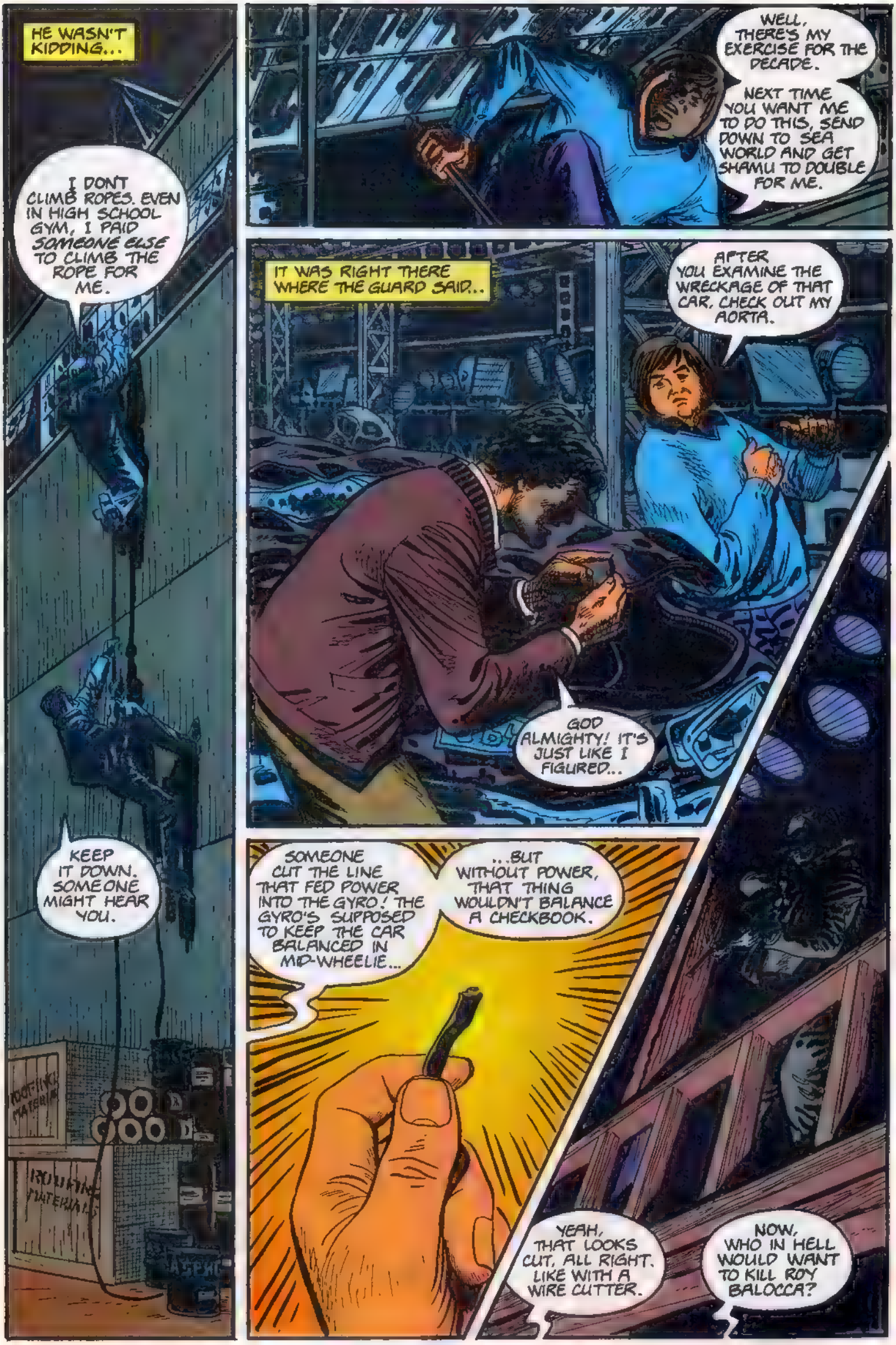
I KNOW, JERRY. REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME WE MET? YOU WERE SHOCKED I KNEW THAT WAS *YOU!*

COME ON! I'M NOT GOING TO LET A MAGGOT LIKE McCORMICK RUN DOWN MY SPINE.

YOU AND I ARE GONNA FIND WHAT'S LEFT OF THAT RACE CAR.

WAIT! WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WHILE YOU'RE GONE?

LESBIAN SOFTBALL PLAYERS... ON THE NEXT GERALDO...
THEY WERE HALFWAY THERE BEFORE HANEY GOT HIS DISCOVERY OUT...
ROY BALOCCA WAS ON THE CALL SHEET FOR "MANEUVERS" THAT NIGHT. DID YOU HAVE OTHER STUNTMEN THERE?
THERE WERE NONE THERE, BESIDES ME. ANYWAY, THAT WAS BEFORE ROY GOT INTO THE BUSINESS. WEIRD.
JERRY NAYLOR STILL HAD FRIENDS AT THE STUDIO...
THE WRECK'S OVER ON THE OLD STAGE EIGHT. AND YOU DIDN'T HEAR IT FROM ME.
THANKS, MONROE. THAT'S ONE MORE I OWE YOU.
BUT...
LOCKED UP TIGHTER THAN DORIS DAY'S CHASTITY BELT. WELL, WE'RE STUCK.
YOU'RE KIDDING, JERRY. TELL ME YOU'RE KIDDING.
NO, WE'RE NOT. THERE'S A WAY IN. UP THERE.


HE WASN'T KIDDING...
I DON'T CLIMB ROPES. EVEN IN HIGH SCHOOL GYM, I PAID SOMEONE ELSE TO CLIMB THE ROPE FOR ME.
KEEP IT DOWN. SOMEONE MIGHT HEAR YOU.
WELL, THERE'S MY EXERCISE FOR THE DECADE.
NEXT TIME YOU WANT ME TO DO THIS, SEND DOWN TO SEA WORLD AND GET SHAMU TO DOUBLE FOR ME.
IT WAS RIGHT THERE WHERE THE GUARD SAID..
AFTER YOU EXAMINE THE WRECKAGE OF THAT CAR, CHECK OUT MY AORTA.
GOD ALMIGHTY! IT'S JUST LIKE I FIGURED...
SOMEONE CUT THE LINE THAT FED POWER INTO THE GYRO! THE GYRO'S SUPPOSED TO KEEP THE CAR BALANCED IN MID-WHEELIE...
..BUT WITHOUT POWER, THAT THING WOULDN'T BALANCE A CHECKBOOK.
YEAH, THAT LOOKS CUT, ALL RIGHT. LIKE WITH A WIRE CUTTER.
NOW, WHO IN HELL WOULD WANT TO KILL ROY BALOCCA?

YEESH. THIS IS LIKE BEING HECKLED IN TEXAS--
--EXCEPT THEY USE SMALLER WEAPONS.

GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE BEFORE NAYLOR DOES SOMETHING...

...BUT I CAN GET RID OF ONE OF THEM...

GORE! WHY IN HELL DID YOU WANT TO KILL US?

MAYBE I'LL GET ME A BETTER ANSWER IF I WAIT 'TIL HE'S CONSCIOUS--!

HEY, LEO! COME ON UP! COAST IS CLEAR!
YOU SURE?
MAYBE WE COULD WAIT TO MAKE CERTAIN?
SURE, I'M SURE! IT'S GORE AND HE AP-
JERRY! BEHIND YOU!

IT HAPPENED JUST LIKE THAT...
IT WASN'T A STUNT. NO AIR BAG WAS BELOW...A THOUGHT WHICH, ODDLY ENOUGH, OCCURRED TO JERRY NAYLOR AS HE WATCHED IN NUMB HORROR...
AND ANOTHER THOUGHT:
THIS IS JUST LIKE THE RUN... RUNNING UP AFTER THE GAG GOES WRONG TO SEE IF THE GUYS ALIVE...
IT WAS ALL OVER BUT FOR THE DYING...
NAYLOR...HEY, I'M SORRY...SORRY YOU GOT MIXED UP IN THIS. YOU WERE ALWAYS AN OKAY GUY...
LOOKS LIKE I'M NEVER GONNA GET TO DIRECT, DON'T IT?
YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, GORE. YOU'RE GOING TO BE--
--ALL RIGHT.

HANEY HAD CALLED AN AMBULANCE WHICH WAS THERE WITHIN THE HALF-HOUR...

SERVICE

AMBUL

JERRY, LISTEN TO ME. THIS WAS NOT YOUR FAULT. CAN YOU HEAR ME? NOT YOUR FAULT!

THE GUY WAS TRYING TO KILL US!

I KNOW I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING... I KNOW, LEO...

I'M JUST SO TIRED OF BEING AROUND DEATH.

YOU OUGHTA STOP WATCHING MY ACT.

WELL, THAT LINE DIDN'T WORK.

HEY, I UNDERSTAND, JERRY. BUT IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT.

YOUR PARTNER IS RIGHT, NAYLOR. YOU DID YOUR JOB.

AND FROM WHAT I HEAR, DID IT WELL. GORE WAS TRYING TO STOP YOU FROM EXAMINING THE WRECK.

WE FOUND A CUT LINE THAT PROBABLY CAUSED THE ACCIDENT.

STAGE

HE SABOTAGED THE CAR THAT KILLED BALOCCA. PROBABLY SOME PERSONAL FEUD... AND HE TRIED TO STOP YOU FROM FINDING OUT.

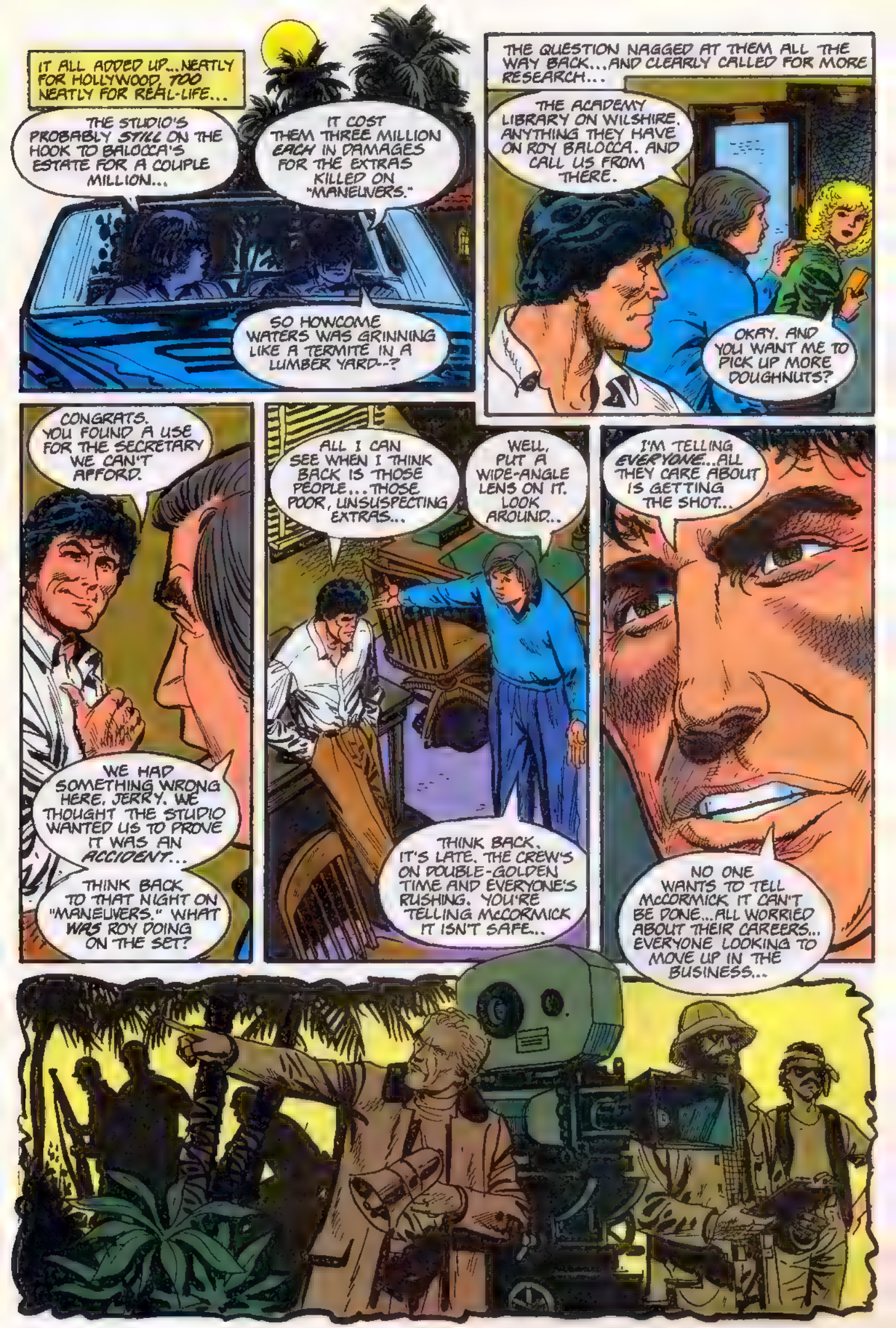
SOUNDS LIKE OPEN-AND-SHUT TO ME.

WE'D LIKE TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER, MR. WATERS...

I SAID IT'S OPEN-AND-SHUT. I'M NOT SPENDING ANY MORE MONEY ON THIS. IT'S OVER.

THANK YOU, GENTLEMEN. SEND ME YOUR BILL.

DON'T WORRY. WE WILL.


IT ALL ADDED UP...NEATLY FOR HOLLYWOOD, TOO NEATLY FOR REAL-LIFE...
THE STUDIO'S PROBABLY STILL ON THE HOOK TO BALOCCA'S ESTATE FOR A COUPLE MILLION...
IT COST THEM THREE MILLION EACH IN DAMAGES FOR THE EXTRAS KILLED ON "MANEUVERS."
SO HOWCOME WATERS WAS GRINNING LIKE A TERMITE IN A LUMBER YARD--?
THE QUESTION NAGGED AT THEM ALL THE WAY BACK...AND CLEARLY CALLED FOR MORE RESEARCH...
THE ACADEMY LIBRARY ON WILSHIRE. ANYTHING THEY HAVE ON ROY BALOCCA. AND CALL US FROM THERE.
OKAY. AND YOU WANT ME TO PICK UP MORE DOUGHNUTS?
CONGRATS. YOU FOUND A USE FOR THE SECRETARY WE CAN'T AFFORD.
WE HAD SOMETHING WRONG HERE, JERRY. WE THOUGHT THE STUDIO WANTED US TO PROVE IT WAS AN ACCIDENT...
THINK BACK TO THAT NIGHT ON "MANEUVERS." WHAT WAS ROY DOING ON THE SET?
ALL I CAN SEE WHEN I THINK BACK IS THOSE PEOPLE...THOSE POOR, UNSUSPECTING EXTRAS...
WELL, PUT A WIDE-ANGLE LENS ON IT. LOOK AROUND...
THINK BACK. IT'S LATE. THE CREW'S ON DOUBLE-GOLDEN TIME AND EVERYONE'S RUSHING. YOU'RE TELLING McCORMICK IT ISN'T SAFE...
I'M TELLING EVERYONE...ALL THEY CARE ABOUT IS GETTING THE SHOT...
NO ONE WANTS TO TELL McCORMICK IT CAN'T BE DONE...ALL WORRIED ABOUT THEIR CAREERS... EVERYONE LOOKING TO MOVE UP IN THE BUSINESS...

THEY'RE DRAGGING ME AWAY... NO ONE WILL LISTEN TO ME...

JERRY, LISTEN TO ME. WHO ELSE IS ON THE SET? IS ROY BALOCCA THERE? THE CREW SHEET SAYS HE WAS...

I DON'T KNOW. I WASN'T LOOKING AT THE CREW. CAMERAMEN ALL OVER... THE ONES SHOOTING THE FILM AND SOME OTHER ONES...

"OTHER ONES?" WHAT OTHER CAMERA-MEN?

A DOCUMENTARY ON McCORMICK... A "MAKING OF" FILM...

IN THE TRIAL, THEY SUBPOENAED ALL THE FOOTAGE, TRYING TO PROVE McCORMICK WAS NEGLIGENT... BUT IT DIDN'T PROVE ANYTHING...

WAS ROY BALOCCA THE CAMERA-MAN?

HE COULD HAVE BEEN... YES...

THE DOCUMENTARY GUYS STAY OUT OF EVERYONE'S WAY...

THE CAMERAMAN... YES, IT COULD HAVE BEEN ROY BALOCCA... BEFORE HE GOT INTO STUNT WORK... YES...

WHAT WOULD THAT MEAN?

WELL, IT *MIGHT* MEAN YOU DIDN'T GET *ALL* THE FOOTAGE FOR THE TRIAL...

WATERS DIDN'T HIRE US TO PROVE THE CAR THING WAS AN ACCIDENT. ALL HE CARED ABOUT WAS THAT WE CLEAR McCORMICK...
McCORMICK'S IN THE MIDDLE OF DIRECTING A FORTY MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE WITH NO INSURANCE!
IF HE GOT INDICTED, WATERS-- WHO OKAYED THE FILM-- WOULD WIND UP MAKING McNUGGETS FOR A LIVING.
YOU PUT THESE THINGS TOGETHER FASTER THAN I DO, LEO. WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH BALOCCA?
MAYBE NOTHING. BUT MAYBE...
LET'S GO FIND MELODY AND HELP HER RESEARCH!
SOON, AT THE ACADEMY LIBRARY...
ALL OF THIS ROY BALOCCA'S EARLY CREDITS ARE AS A CAMERAMAN BEFORE HE GOT INTO STUNT WORK...
HOW DOES A GUY MAKE THAT CAREER CHANGE? "STEP UP TO THE BIG PAY! DRIVE CARS THROUGH WALLS!"
NEVER MIND THAT. LOOK WHAT'S HERE.
Gore Pacts to Helm "Making of" Doc
Kaypar Studios has announced that Gore Berkenshire will produce and direct "The Making of...Maneuvers," new mini-doc to chronicle making of latest feature by Mac McCormick. Documentary will receive runs on HBO, Showtime, Movie Channel and other pay outlets, as well as figuring in video press kit for the feature. Roy Balocca will serve as camer[illegible]erson.
JEE-ZUS! BALOCCA WAS WORKING FOR GORE THAT NIGHT--!
Rapopo
Signs S
Rapoport Fi
producers of n
for CBS ann
project will inc
writers as C
Goldberg, B
Gannon, Arth
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WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
SOMETHING IMPORTANT. WISH I KNEW WHAT.
WELL, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

WE GO SEE McCORMICK. THAT'S WHERE WE GO.
WAIT! DO YOU THINK THAT'S SUCH A GOOD IDEA?
NAYLOR WAS QUIET ALL THE WAY THERE. AND WORRIED...
THIS IS SILLY. I'VE JUMPED OUT OF PLANES... I DROVE A CAR OFF THE GRAND CANYON...
NOW, FACING McCORMICK, I'M SHAKIN' LIKE A TEENAGER ON HIS FIRST DATE...
HE SAYS HE'LL SEE YOU NOW.
TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT.
OH, I HAVE A TAPE THAT MIGHT INTEREST YOU...
IT'S ROUGH FOOTAGE FROM "THE MAKING OF MANEUVERS," PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROY BALOCCA...
GEE, I WONDER WHAT IS ON THIS TAPE. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA, MAC?
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?
IT WAS GORE, WASN'T IT? DAMN HIM! HE SWORE TO ME THERE WERE NO MORE COPIES!
WELL, LET'S SEE... WHAT DID BALOCCA GET?
HE WANTED A SHOT AT STUNTWORK-GORE WANTED TO DIRECT SECOND UNIT WITH A SHOT AT THE BIG TIME...

IT WASN'T THE JOBS OR THE PAYMENTS THAT GOT TO ME. IT WAS THAT THEY WERE ORDERING ME AROUND!
CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT? THEM GIVING ME ORDERS--!
NOBODY TELLS ME WHAT TO DO! I TELL THEM! AND THEY'D DAMN WELL BETTER OBEY!
HE'S JUST A MAN...A LOUD, PSYCHOTIC MAN... NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF...
GIVE ME THAT TAPE. NOW.
WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF I WANT TO DO...
GIVE ME THAT TAPE!
ARE ALL DIRECTORS THAT MEAN?
I'LL BRING HIM BACK HERE. HE HAS A LOT TO ANSWER FOR.

MR. MCCORMICK! WE'RE TESTING THE NEW CAR OUT HERE!
ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T LISTEN--!
NO! NOT AGAIN--! NOT AGAIN...

MR. McCORMICK, I AM NO LONGER AFRAID OF YOU. AND I'M GOING TO SEE THAT YOU GET WHAT'S COMING TO YOU.
WAY TO GO, JER!
LEO, WHERE DID YOU GET THAT TAPE?
VIDEO WORLD. AND BOY, ARE THEY GONNA BE STEAMED WHEN THEY SEE THEIR COPY OF "DAUGHTERS OF SATAN."

THE NEXT DAY...

THEY WERE OUT OF GLAZED SO I GOT EXTRA POWDERED SUGAR.

GREAT. YOU STICK WITH US, MELODY, AND IN NO TIME AT ALL YOU'LL BE IN THE BIG TIME...

...GOING FOR CRULLERS... DANISH...EVEN BAGELS!

I CAN DO *OTHER* THINGS, LEO. JUST GIVE ME A CHANCE AND I'LL *PROVE* HOW VALUABLE I CAN BE TO THIS AGENCY.

UNLESS, OF COURSE, I GET A PART IN SOMETHING.

McCORMICK IS ALL OVER THE PAPERS...

DIRECTOR CONFESSES

HE'S SWEARING HE DIDN'T KILL BALOCCA... SAYS IT WAS GORE WHO SABOTAGED THE RACE CAR...

THEY HAD SOME SORT OF FALLING OUT OVER RAISING THE BLACKMAIL STAKES AGAINST McCORMICK...

BUT THEY'RE GOING TO REOPEN THE CASE ON "MANEUVERS" AND MY GUESS IS THAT McCORMICK WILL BE INDICTED...ESPECIALLY IF THEY FIND THAT FILM...

NOW, ABOUT *US*, MELODY...

WHERE'S JERRY?

I CAN'T BELIEVE A MAN AS TOUGH AS HIM COULD ALSO BE SO...SO *SENSITIVE*.

UHHH... YEAH. HE GOT A CALL THEY WANTED TO SEE HIM AT THE STUDIO...

Y'KNOW, MELODY, I COULD HELP YOU A LOT WITH YOUR CAREER. MAYBE WE COULD DISCUSS IT OVER DINNER?

AT THE STUDIO...
THE POLICE FOUND THIS TAPE IN MCCORMICK'S VAULT. GUESS HIS EGO WOULD NOT ALLOW HIM TO DESTROY ANY HISTORY ABOUT HIMSELF...
I FIGURED YOU'D WANT TO SEE IT.
YOU'RE GOING TO GET SOMEONE KILLED, MCCORMICK! AND ALL FOR A MOVIE ...ALL FOR A LOUSY, STINKIN' LITTLE—
NAYLOR'S RIGHT. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD ME MOVE THOSE MORTARS! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!
I DON'T GIVE A DAMN, GORE. THIS IS MY FILM AND ON MY FILM, NOBODY TELLS ME I CAN'T HAVE IT THE WAY I WANT!
IF THOSE PEOPLE GET HURT, TOO DAMN BAD. THIS MOVIE'S GONNA GET ME THE RECOGNITION I'VE DESERVED!
NOW, HIT THE EXPLOSIONS WHEN THE CHOPPERS ARE RIGHT OVER THEM!

I THINK YOU CAN GUESS WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF THEY'D SHOWN THAT AT THE INQUIRY.
NAYLOR! CAN YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYING?
WHAT YOU'RE SAYING? OH. SORRY.
YOU CAN SEE IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, JERRY. MAYBE NOW YOU CAN GET BACK INTO THE BUSINESS. WHICH BRINGS ME TO WHY I ASKED YOU HERE...
I NEED SOMEONE TO TAKE OVER THE FILM MCCORMICK WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF. THE REST OF IT'S MOSTLY STUNT WORK...
I KNOW YOU STUNT COORDINATORS ALWAYS WANT TO DIRECT. I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'D...
I'M NOT A STUNT COORDINATOR ANY MORE. I GAVE IT UP.
BUT DIDN'T YOU HEAR? YOU WEREN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR THE "MANEUVERS" TRAGEDY...OR THE ACCIDENT WITH BALOCCA--
NAYLOR, YOU'RE THE BEST! WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GET BACK INTO THE BUSINESS?
JUST AS SOON AS THOSE PEOPLE AREN'T DEAD ANYMORE.
The End

SHOW BUSINESS

by Mark Evanier

Cartoons by Aragonés

It is a time-honored custom that, every time Mark Evanier collaborates with Dan Spiegle on a comic book set in Hollywood, the rear of the comic features Mark's ongoing series of essays on what he laughingly calls his career as a TV Writer. And who are we to muck with tradition? This one's short but, starting next month, they'll be a lot longer.

Mark's essays are illustrated by Sergio Aragonés, when he isn't drawing GROO THE WANDERER.

In future issues, we may also be featuring a letter page. And, then again, we may not. There's no telling just what we'll do.

Let me set the scene for you:

We're in a corridor of the NBC studios in Burbank, California. We are just outside one of the rehearsal halls, opposite where Floyd the Shoe Shine Man, he of the steadiest employment in all of show business, polishes the loafers of Big Execs and Bigger Stars who will soon be gone. One of the high points of the NBC Studio Tour — and this about says it all for the tour — is the stopover to meet Floyd and hear him tell of the time Elvis Presley tipped him a hundred dollars for a spit-shine and then Frank Sinatra, not to be outtipped, gave him five times that.

In the rehearsal hall, a variety show is rehearsing. Loitering in the hallway are the actors not involved in the sketch currently being blocked, chatting with the show's writers, of whom I am one.

With me is writer Bob Logan, who has since gone on to write and direct the feature film "Repossessed"; actresses Victoria Jackson and Jan Hooks, who have since joined "Saturday Night Live"; actor John Paragon, presently part of the "Pee-Wee's Playhouse" ensemble and writing crew; and actor John Moschitta, Jr., who gained fame as the World's Fastest Talker in those classic Federal Express commercials. Nearby, our Executive Producer, Dick Clark — yes, *the* Dick Clark — is associating with the Associate Producer.

Everything is peaceful, just idle chatter being made. Then, from down the hall, heading for Floyd, comes the NBC Studio Tour, led briskly ("Stay with the group, *please!*") by an NBC Page. And I guess I should describe an NBC Page: An NBC Page is a neatly-coiffed, well-scrubbed Young American in a blue blazer who is being paid wages that would insult a McDonald's shake-puller. This, they gladly accept for the chance to get inside a for-real TV studio, take tickets, usher at tapings, conduct the silly tours and (they think:) make that first entry-level step towards the ultimate goal of replacing Johnny Carson and/or Brandon Tartikoff.

That the tour is silly is not their fault. Not all that much fascinating is happening at any given moment around a studio and, when happen it does, the demands and costs of production time usually make it awkward to have gawkers about. One of the main responsibilities of a Page is to keep the visitors from interfering with actual TV production or seeing things they perhaps shouldn't see. Keep that in mind for what follows.

So the tour shows you where they store sets, where Carson parks, where costumes are sewn and where Floyd shines Florsheims. And that's about it. Today though, we have decided to make it more interesting.

Every twenty minutes, a tour comes by — all those anxious faces from Wichita, casting about for a trace of tinsel, a glimpse of glamour. You can almost hear their thoughts — "No, *he's* not anybody" — as they scan our faces. Dick Clark, possessor of the only face in this hall presently recognizable (and, probably, the youngest) deftly averts his from the tour's gaze. But we know he's there and to amuse the man signing our checks, as well as ourselves, we have decided to stage a little Dinner Theatre for the tourists.

This is all improvised on the spot and I will omit the filthy words and specifics about stars' sexual habits. But Logan has suddenly assumed the role of some show's director, Paragon is its writer, I am some unspecified production exec and the others are its actors. None of this was discussed; as the tour comes close, we just fall into our unassigned roles.

Logan throws the script down and announces loudly that it stinks, that it is manure, that he's not doing it and that he's not working with such lousy actors. He likens the actors to

various and sundry body parts not usually mentioned on TV, then he turns to Paragon and fires him. Paragon, as the writer of the script, bursts into tears and pleads for his job.

I start insisting that the show must go on because Big Name Stars are booked to appear. And each time I name a Big Name Star, Logan powerfully proclaims that the person I have named is a no-talent moron and/or a molester of small animals and/or a bigamist with eleven wives and/or a relentless heroin addict. Of one in particular, Bob responds that the famous male movie star is a flaming homosexual, that he has an immense cocaine habit and that he needs a cue card to use the Men's Room. Jan Hooks loudly protests that the star is *not* gay and she oughta know because she has been forced to sleep with him, as with darn near everyone, to get them on the show. (This is all played out in boisterous, vulgar terms for the benefit of those in the tour grouping.)

I cast a look over at the tour. You have never seen eyes that big.

They are mesmerized. In one minute, they are hearing more filth about stars' lives than the *Enquirer* dispenses in a decade.

The NBC Page has turned the color of Miracle Whip and is hurriedly urging the tour to move on, step lively, get the hell outta here. He has no idea what is going on in this hallway, what manner of Important People are quarrelling, but he can sure smell something that could get him fired. Trouble is, the tourists don't want to budge.

Meanwhile, our psycho-drama is continuing. Logan fires Victoria who promptly gets hysterical, announces she is carrying his child and moves to grab him by the throat. Moschitta restrains her while I tell Logan he's through and will never work in this town again. We begin to shout about various high-level NBC executives and their deviant sexual practices.

Nearby, the Page is practically dragging the little old ladies away from us. "Come on," he is yelling. "I'm going to show you how they letter cue cards!" Reluctantly, the tourists head out of this corridor. And without even meeting Floyd.

By this time, we are all convulsed in laughter and Dick Clark can barely stand up straight; he is leaning against the wall for support. What is so funny about all this is not just the wide, hypnotized eyes of the tourists; not just the instant panic of the flappable NBC Page. No, what is so funny is that we have all, as one, realized that just for a moment, Show Business was as colorful as it's supposed to be. At least for one outing of the NBC Tour.

Everyone who gets into the TV and/or movie field suffers something of a disappointment; the business is fascinating but it's not always fascinating the way we'd like it to be. There is money, there is fame, there are beautiful people and there is back-stabbing and failure to degrees that are painful. There are folks with severe failings in the self-respect department who are groping desperately for success and adoration (and, too often, the pain of others). There are people whose talents and careers are enthralling. There are folks just in it for the money. In Show Business, one finds just about every kind of person and every motivation that could conceivably exist on this planet.

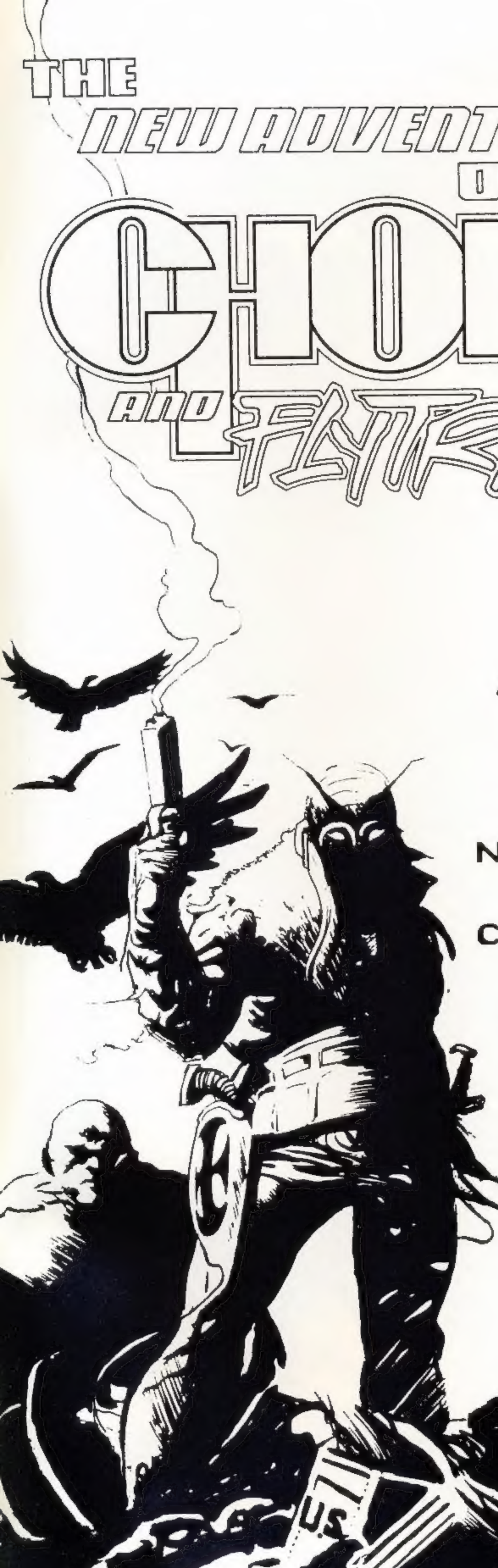
But not a lot of glamour.

And though everyone in the industry would like there to be a little more color, a tad more tinsel, they never allow it to happen. Take, for example, the Unit Manager at NBC — the one who came down and told us that the next time we pulled a stunt like that in front of a tour, our whole show would get bounced out of the building and have to go tape at a Burger King. The first time the tour was ever interesting and they say that. Boy, some people...

— *Mark Evanier*

NEXT MONTH:

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF CHOLLY AND FLYTRAP™



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PAST AND FUTURE

MONSTERS AND MACHINES

Cadillacs AND

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